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Book review

Handbook of autopsy practice, Brenda L. Waters (Ed.), 4th ed. Humana Press (2009), ISBN: 978-1-58829-841-6

This 4th edition of Handbook of Autopsy Practice is a thoroughly updated version. Autopsy practice has undergone significant changes in recent time due to technological advancements such as molecular diagnostics, immunohistochemistry and the introduction of post-mortem imaging techniques. In the same period the autopsy rate in teaching hospitals has declined. A comprehensive and updated version is therefore most welcome. Part I has six completely new chapters, and contains an assortment of tools of great practical value for the forensic pathologist. There is for example a next-of-kin letter for the family of the deceased and a quality assurance worksheet. The text is written in a well-formulated language, and is not too long. The illustrations and photos are of a high quality. All photos are black-and-white. The book covers a broad area of relevance to autopsy practice, including specialized techniques used for post-mortem investigation of the cardio-vascular system, the nervous system and eye and adnexa. Autopsy microbiology, chemistry and

chromosome analysis and autopsies of bodies containing radioactive material are also among the topics that are addressed in this handbook, as well as post-mortem imaging techniques. Part II begins with a list of special histologic stains, but the bulk is devoted to an alphabetic listing of major diseases with possible or expected findings and recommended procedures. This part has also been updated with new diseases and recent references. Part III provides a series of tables providing organ weights and body measurements for foetuses, children and adults.

The Handbook of Autopsy Practice fulfils its purpose, and is a very worthwhile purchase for any autopsy facility.

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